

Dear Bill,

Thank you for taking the time to discuss the Sheep Creek Vegetation management project with me. There are some additional items that I wanted to address, so I'm going to try and verbalize it all in writing.

- As I understand from the open house, the project has a tentative start date of 2022, and is expected to take up to 10 years to complete. My concern is the construction/designation of the new ATV trails, and I would hope we don't have to wait 12 years until the completion of the project, before that would happen. I'd like to see it start as soon as possible. I'm sure the OHV community could provide the labor, and minimize any costs to the USFS. If trails were designated in advance, and need to be temporarily closed to accommodate contractors while they are working on the thinning projects, that could be addressed case by case as the need arises.

- From talking with USFS staff members over the years, it's my understanding that the USFS follows Oregon law about ATV's on paved roads? If this is still correct, in accordance with state law, Union County has now designated all paved roads in Union County as being now open for ATV use, with a few exceptions. This gives the USFS latitude to open Forest Road 51 to ATV use, and I'd like to see that happen as part of this project.

- As the project progresses and roads get re-closed, I'd like to ask that it be done in a manor that still allows game carts, bicycle carts, mule carts, and buckboard wagons to use them after they are re-closed. The manor in which many of the roads in the WWNF have previously been closed, is not conducive to non mechanized wheeled travel on them.

- Road 5182-034 is used by dispersed campers. Currently those wanting to haul their RV's back there, have to pull them for over 10 miles of dirt road in order to get there. At the intersection of Rd. 5182 and 5182-035, the corner of the road is too tight to make a turn heading east on 5182. If, during the Rd. 5182-040 commercial thinning project, the road intersection could be widened with a bigger sweep, both the contractors hauling logs, as will as the public, would be able to turn east and drive the one mile to Rd. 51 and reach pavement, instead of 10 miles of dirt road the other direction.

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- We had previously discussed my concern on the Green Dot road management areas on whether an E-bike is a motorized vehicle, or not, and the USFS rule conflicting with state law, as well as getting the rule published on the maps. This would enable everyone to be on the same page when it comes to the rules.

But I wanted to address another item on the Green Dot system discussion. ATV camping has become very popular in recent years, because it allows a rider to camp away from the usual camping crowds. The rule on the Starkey unit Green Dot map currently states "only roads shown in green, and the adjacent area within 300 ft. of those roads is open to motorized vehicles." This rule allows dispersed campers to set their camps up away from the road and helps minimize dust and noise from other vehicles traveling by on the road. I'd like to ask that the rule be updated to "only roads [and trails](#) shown in green,". This would allow the ATV users to have the same opportunities on the green dot OHV trails that full size vehicles enjoy on the green dot roads.

- The OHV map shows proposed new OHV trails. I support all the trails that are proposed (identified in purple and yellow), but I'd like to add further special emphasis support of the proposed 5182-040 trail (purple) and the proposed 5182-055/5200-675 trail (yellow). The proposed 5182-055/5200-675 trail will be crucial for any future southerly connection to the Packsaddle ATV trail on the southern end of the Winom Frazier complex. The 5182-040 trail will further compliment that goal.

- Efforts are currently underway for La Grande to mirror the ATV ordinance that Union County recently adopted. Once successful, the ATV community will be looking to access the Winom Frazier complex directly from their homes in La Grande. Currently, it's pretty hard, but doable using ML1 roads, to access the Winom Frazier from Glass Hill Rd. in La Grande. I'd like to ask that it be a future goal of this project to access the Winom Frazier directly from La Grande. As well as any other further USFS projects that might help facilitate this.

Thank you for your consideration.

David Thiesfeld
La Grande

P.S. Please let me know if this reaches you, sometimes my email gets caught in USFS spam filters. Thanks.